

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TORONT 01446 102012Z
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SUBJECT: ONTARIO ELECTIONS: TORIES RETURNED WITH MINORITY GOVERNMENT
IN ELECTION ALL PARTIES LOST

REF: TORONTO 1285

1. IN A REPLAY OF 1975 ELECTION, ONTARIO'S VOTERS JUNE 9
RETURNED PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS' PROGRSSIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT
IN A MINORITY POSITION WITH 58 OUT OF 125 SEATS IN THE PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE. THE LIBERAL PARTY APPEARS TO HAVE REGAINED FROM
THE NDP THE STATUS OF OFFICIAL OPPOSITION IN SECOND PLACE WITH
34 SEATS AND THE NDP WERE ELECTED TO 33 SEATS. IN THE LEGISLATURE
DISSOLVED APRIL 29, THE TORIES HAD 52 SEATS, THE NDP 38 AND THE
LIBERALS 35. RESULTS MAY STILL CHANGE DEPENDINGON RECOUNTS IN
SEVERAL CLOSE RIDINGS AND, WHILE UNLIKELY, NDP COULD RETAIN SECOND
PLACE.

2. PREMIER DAVIS' ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO MAJORITY GOVERNMENT (63 SEATS)
WAS DEFEATED BY THE VOTERS AND WHILE THE TORIES ARE STRONGER
BY 6 SEATS AND HAVE INCREASED PERCENTAGE SHARE OF POPULAR VOTE
BY A LITTLE OVER 3 PERCENTAGE POINTS TO 39 PERCENT, THE KEY TO
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PAGE 02 TORONT 01446 102012Z

THE TORY CAMPAIGN WAS THE ALLEGED NEED FOR STRONG MINORITY
GOVERNMENT TO FACE THE CRISES OF CONFEDERATION AND, EVEN WITH
INCREASES AT THE POLLS, THE TORIES CANNOT BE SAID TO HAVE WON.

3. THE MEDIA'S WINNER OF THE JUNE 9 ELECTION IS DR. STUART SMITH,
THE LIBERAL LEADER, WHO DID OVERCOME AN ABYSMAL START AND VERY
BAD IMAGE PROBLEMS TO ACHIEVE SECOND PLACE. WHILE THIS RECOVERY

WAS MOST IMPRESSIVE, THE LIBERALS DID LOSE NE SEAT AND ALMOST 2 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN SHARE OF POPULAR VOTE (DOWN TO 32 PERCENT). IN METROPLITAN TORONTO THE LIBERALS CAPUTRED ONLY ONE OF 29 RIDINGS AND THAT RIDING WAS WON BECAUSE OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE CANDIDATE MORE THAN PARTY ISSUES. THE LIBERALS HELD 3 METRO RIDINGS IN THE LAST LEGISLATURE.

4. STEPHEN LEWIS AND THE NDP WERE THE WORST LOSERS IN THE CAMPAIGN, GIVING UP 5 SEATS IN THE LEGISLATURE WITH A DECLINE OF ALMOST A PERCENTAGE POINT IN A POPULAR VOTE SHARE DOWN TO 28 PERCENT. IN HIS USUAL FORTHRIGHT MANNER, LEWIS OBSERVED JUNE 10 ON CAMPAIGN PROBLEMS IMPOSED BY NDP CONVENTION'S POLICY DECIONS, E.G. DOLS 4 PER HOUR MINIMUM WAGE AND NATURAL RESOURCE NATIONALIZATION.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE PRESS JUNE 10 VIEWS ELECTION RESULTS AS CONFIRMATION BY ELECTORATE OF PREFERENCE FOR MINORITY GOVERNMENT, WE SUSPECT RESULTS REFLECT MORE THE FACT THAT ALL THREE PARTIES MUST BE CONSIDERED TO BE INGRAINED INTO ONTARIO POLITICS, THAT TORIES AND NDP MADE TACTICAL MISTAKES IN DISCOUNTING LIBERALS, THAT TORY OVERKILL PUBLICITY BACKFIRED AND THAT LACK OF ANY REAL ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN (UNITY NON-ISSUE APPARENTLY NOT AS POTENT AS HOPED) ALLOWED LIBERALS IN PARTICULAR TO EFFECTIVELY PUSH CONTENTION THAT 20 MILLION DOLLAR ELECTION UNNECESSARY. LAST MINORITY GOVERNMENT ENDURED FOR SURPRISING 18 MONTHS. IT LIKELY THAT THIS MINORITY GOVERNMENT WILL LAST MUCH LONGER AS WE DOUBT ANY LEADER WILL CAUSE ELECTIONS UNLESS ISSUE REAL AND ENDURING.

6. WHAT MIGHT BE MOST SIGNIFICANT IN JUNE 9 ELECTION RESULTS
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PAGE 03 TORONT 01446 102012Z

ARE EFFECTS ON LEADERSHIP. PREMIER DAVIS' CHANCES OF CATAPULTING ONTO NATIONAL TORY SCENE HAVE PROBABLY EVAPORATED WITH LUKEWARM MANDATE HE RECEIVED; IT IS SUSPECTED THAT STEPHEN LEWIS, ONE OF CANADA'S MOST EFFECTIVE POLITICAL SPEAKERS, MIGHT TURN HIS TALENTS TO OTHER FIELDS; STUART SMITY HAD MATURED MORE IN THE PUBLIC IMAGE IN FINAL 2 WEEKS OF CAMPAIGN THAN HE DID IN HIS FIRST YEAR OF LEADERSHIP AND IT WILL BE INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT USE HE MAKES OF THE POSITION OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.
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